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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 NAIROBI 001909

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/E AND A/S CARSON

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [EAID](#) [PTER](#) [SO](#)

SUBJECT: SOMALIA - INACTION COSTING THE TFG SUPPORT IN KEY REGIONS

REF: A. NAIROBI 1655
[1](#)B. NAIROBI 1565
[1](#)C. NAIROBI 1445
[1](#)D. NAIROBI 1297
[1](#)E. NAIROBI 1244

Classified By: Counselor for Somalia Affairs Bob Patterson for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: TFG inaction is robbing the Somali central government of support in key regions, making it less likely the TFG will be able to capitalize on regional victories over al-Shabaab. Our contacts tell us the late-August loss of western Beledweyne to al-Shabaab was due, in part, to TFG troop infighting over salaries. Abdirahman Ma'ow, former Beledweyne governor and alleged ally of al-Shabaab commander Mukhtar Robow, is reportedly attempting to highlight lack of TFG support to pull TFG forces and community leaders in Hiraan into alliance with him. Similarly, our contacts within ASWJ/north Galgaduud tell us the community there is putting pressure on ASWJ to pull out of the June TFG-ASWJ agreement because of lack of TFG support. We believe local forces throughout Somalia, whether or not they are linked to the TFG, will continue to fight al-Shabaab. However, lack of TFG support will probably cause the defection of some TFG-aligned forces to al-Shabaab, and prevent regional successes over al-Shabaab from translating into victories for the TFG. We are encouraging the TFG to ensure that its promised support to ASWJ extends beyond the minimal aid given thus far only to ASWJ militia that share clan affiliation with President Sharif. We are also encouraging the TFG to urgently support forces in Beledweyne and to counter Ma'ow's messages with positive statements of support for Hiraan's local administrations.

[1](#)2. (C) In early September former Beledweyne governor Abdirahman Ma'ow returned to Beledweyne after three months in Mogadishu. Our contacts tell us that Ma'ow is attempting to use lack of TFG support to the region as a rallying call to discourage local support for the TFG. (Note: Ma'ow is the former governor of Beledweyne and is suspected by many Somalis in the region of complicity in the assassination of former Defense Minister Omar Hashi (refs A, B). Contacts representing multiple clans tell us that Ma'ow enjoys little support in the region, but is adept at playing subclans against each other from behind the scenes. End Note.) Ma'ow traveled from Mogadishu to Mudug, Galgaduud, and Hiraan regions, where he criticized the TFG, before reaching Beledweyne. Our contacts tell us that recently Ma'ow met in Beledweyne with al-Shabaab commander Mukhtar Robow and was successful in peeling 70, out of approximately 800, TFG

forces away from the TFG before TFG General Mukhtar pulled out of the TFG-controlled eastern part of the town in order to sequester his troops and prevent further defections. Ma'ow's attempts to leverage growing discontent over salary non-payment among TFG-aligned forces builds on recent events.

13. (C) In late July TFG-aligned forces took control of most of Beledweyne by force. However, three weeks later the TFG lost the western part of the town after they left the city undefended to attack Hiran's second city Bulobarde (ref b). According to a contact on the ground at the time, Ethiopian-supported TFG efforts to re-take western Beledweyne in late August failed when TFG forces started fighting amongst themselves. Underlying tensions between forces which had been paid and those which had not reportedly boiled over when internal disagreements over the Ethiopian presence were added to the mix.

14. (C) During a September 8 phone call with PolOffs, TFG Police General Mukhtar said his withdrawal from Beledweyne was strategic. Mukhtar told us he took TFG forces out of the town in order to regroup and prevent Ma'ow from peeling away additional forces. Mukhtar said the TFG since June has only provided his forces with a few rations and that the local community has been voluntarily feeding his fighters, a fact that Ma'ow is attempting to exploit. According to Mukhtar, who is echoed by Security Minister Abdulahi Mohamed Ali, Ma'ow has convinced al-Shabaab to stay out of the city for now because he does not want to be seen as having brought al-Shabaab into the eastern part of the town. Mukhtar opined, however, that al-Shabaab is in de facto control of eastern

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Beledweyne because Ma'ow and even Robow travel freely in the eastern part of town. (Note: Robow in recent months has fallen out with top al-Shabaab leader Abu Zubeyr "Godane" and may be attempting, through discussions with Ma'ow, to repair his credentials as a Shabaab leader. End Note.)

15. (C) Mukhtar said he thinks his forces can take back the city if they receive support from the TFG. According to Mukhtar, financial support is critical, but even political support would go a long way in lifting his forces' morale. Mukhtar expressed optimism that the local population does not believe an alliance with al-Shabaab will lead to the regional administration many in Hiraan are working toward. Our contacts tell us 63 clan elders in Beledweyne have condemned Ma'ow's actions. Additionally, clan and diaspora leaders from Hiraan have told us fundraising efforts in support of a regional administration continue and they think they will make progress, despite recent events.

16. (C) During a September 8 meeting with PolOffs, ASWJ/north Galgaduud leaders expressed similar frustration with lack of TFG support and said their local communities are putting pressure on them to pull out of the June TFG-ASWJ agreement (refs c,d,e). (Note: The TFG in August provided support to ASWJ in south Galgaduud via an ammunition shipment to the region, but has yet to provide support to legitimate leaders of ASWJ in north Galgaduud. North Galgaduud is a Hawiye/Habr Gedir clan stronghold. We believe loss of ASWJ support for the TFG in that region would be a significant blow to the TFG. The ASWJ/south Galgaduud faction is from the same Abgal subclan as President Sharif. End Note.) The ASWJ/north Galgaduud leaders, who were signatories to the June TFG-ASWJ agreement, said their communities are resentful of continued ASWJ pleas for their financial support. The communities reportedly believe the TFG-ASWJ agreement must have led to contributions from the TFG and the international community to ASWJ/north Galgaduud and, therefore, they do not understand why ASWJ/north Galgaduud leaders keep coming back to them for food, money, and guns. Additionally, the ASWJ/north Galgaduud leaders told us support from the diaspora has dried up because of the same perception that the group is getting support from the TFG.

17. (C) According to multiple contacts, the TFG gave money to an ASWJ figure in Mogadishu who promised to deliver it to north Galgaduud. However, ASWJ leaders in north Galgaduud tell us the money never reached them because the individual the TFG chose to pass the funds did not represent them and was chosen solely because he has ties to some TFG officials. (Note: We believe that some members of the TFG are intentionally dragging their feet on support to ASWJ/north Galgaduud because they do not want to embolden the Habr Gedir-dominated region. The Abgal and Habr Gedir are historical Hawiye subclan rivals. End Note.) A commander of the ASWJ/north Galgaduud told us he is in contact with the ASWJ/south Galgaduud group and plans to cooperate with them to take control of the strategic town of El Buur. However, he said he is worried about his ability to do so without greater support. The ASWJ/north Galgaduud leaders told us any gesture from the TFG, such as uniforms for ASWJ/north Galgaduud forces or messages of support for their troops, would help them answer growing calls from the community to pull out of the TFG-ASWJ agreement.

18. (C) Comment: The combined lack of pledged international support, government incapacity, public silence, and lack of political will are robbing the TFG of support in key regions in Somalia. We believe local forces throughout Somalia will continue to fight al-Shabaab, whether or not they are linked to the TFG. However, lack of TFG support will probably cause the defection of some TFG-aligned forces and prevent regional successes over al-Shabaab from translating into victories for the TFG. We are encouraging the TFG to ensure that its pledged support to ASWJ extends beyond minimal support to only ASWJ militia that share clan affiliation with President Sharif. We are also encouraging the TFG to urgently support forces in Beledweyne and to counter Ma'ow's messages with positive statements of support for Hiraan's local administrations. In addition, we think the NGO Interpeace's plans to build local administrations through a pre-existing peace-building initiative may be a good vehicle to broker political discussions between local administrations and the

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TFG. Similar efforts by Interpeace after Somaliland's civil war in the early 1990s were widely considered to have contributed to Somaliland's return to relative stability. End Comment.

RANNEBERGER